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ABSTRACT

The Alternative School Teacher Education Program, cooperatively developed by participating public schools and Indiana University, is a field-based masters degree program designed for completion in one calendar year. Students spend two summers on campus pursuing graduate course work. During the academic year between these summers, students earn internship and independent study credit while working in an alternative public school. The sequence of course work is organized into four phases: Personal Exploration; Surveying Alternative Schools; Teaching Internship; and Students Teaching Students. The program has two clusters of objectives: one deals with the training of teachers, while the other focuses on public school renewal. By the time the program is completed, teachers must demonstrate their ability to: (1) provide a comprehensive personal analysis of their abilities and conceptualize their goals as educators; (2) develop and complete an individual program of self-development designed to move them toward their goals; (3) develop a comprehensive rationale for alternative education and be able to describe and critique the types of alternatives presently in operation; (4) successfully complete the process of obtaining a field internship; (5) complete an internship in an alternative school; (6) create and implement a new educational component for the school district in which they are interning; (7) participate in the professional development of future interns; and (8) obtain a position in public education. The objectives for school renewal vary among school districts but include the conceptualization, development, and implementation of entirely new schools, courses, and programs. (DMT)

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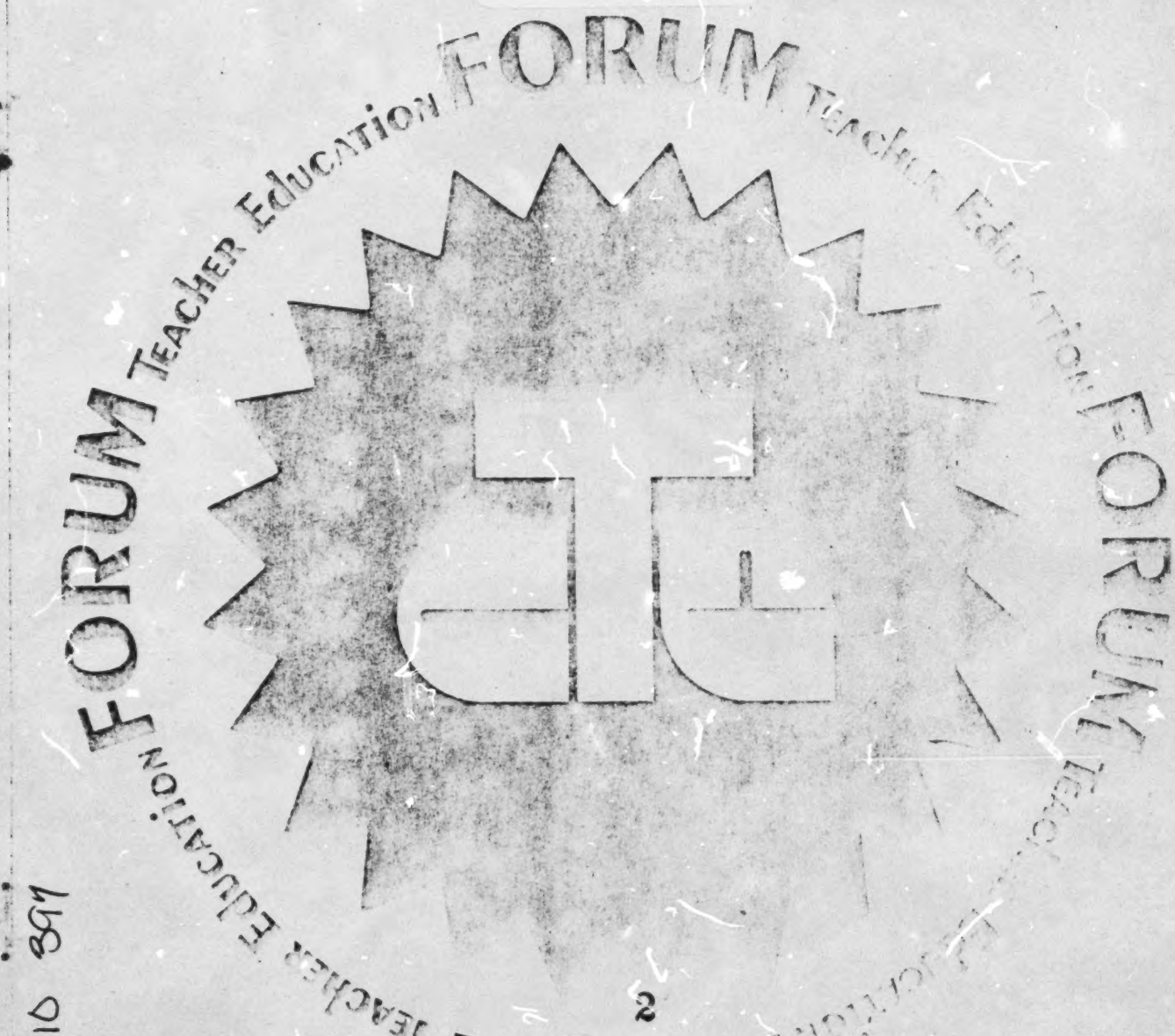

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TEACHER EDUCATION FORUM

The *Forum Series* is basically a collection of papers dealing with all phases of teacher education including inservice training and graduate study. It is intended to be a catalyst for idea exchange and interaction among those interested in all areas of teacher education. The reading audience includes teachers, school administrators, governmental and community administrators of educational agencies, graduate students and professors. The *Forum Series* represents a wide variety of content: position papers, research or evaluation reports, compendia, state-of-the-art analyses, reactions/critiques of published materials, case studies, bibliographies, conference or convention presentations, guidelines, innovative course/program descriptions, and scenarios are welcome. Manuscripts usually average ten to thirty double-spaced typewritten pages; two copies are required. Bibliographical procedures may follow any accepted style; however, all footnotes should be prepared in a consistent fashion. Manuscripts should be submitted to William E. Blanton, editor. Editorial decisions are made as soon as possible; accepted papers usually appear in print within two to four months.

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AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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OVERVIEW

As public school districts have begun to diversify their programs through the development of optional alternative schools, a common concern has been where to find trained teachers to staff the open schools, schools without-walls, learning centers, continuation schools, free schools, multicultural schools, and schools-within-schools that they are designing and developing. Often these new schools demand entirely new roles and new skills for teachers. During the last four years several of these public school districts have worked closely with Indiana University in developing a field-based program designed to prepare new teachers for these new alternative schools being developed in public education.

The Alternative School Teacher Education Program, a master's degree program in secondary education, has developed a relationship of mutual assistance with cooperating alternative public schools. Now in its third year of operation it remains the only program of its kind in the nation. The Program provides certified teachers an opportunity to prepare for new roles in alternative public schools while completing the master's degree. For the cooperating public schools, the Program provides a resource of trained graduate interns and university professors to assist the school districts in planning and operating new alternative schools. The schools then become field training sites for the graduate students during a year-long teaching internship, and local personnel agree to assume a major responsibility for the supervision and professional development of the interns. In turn, the interns are given the opportunity to participate in the planning, development, implementation, and operation of these new public school alternatives. Resident teachers in the local alternative schools are also given the opportunity to participate in the master's degree program. This unique relationship between Indiana University and cooperating public schools has led to the creation and support of new alternative schools in sixteen public school districts in ten states, while simultaneously developing a small corps of trained professionals available to assume support roles in the area of optional public education.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Background

Administrators have discovered that there are few teachers available with experience and training in alternative schools and that "good" teachers

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in conventional schools do not necessarily make an effective transition into new educational environments. Often an entirely "new" conception of "teacher" is needed to operationalize these new schools and programs.

Program

The Alternative School Teacher Education Program, cooperatively developed by participating public schools and Indiana University (I.U.), is a field-based masters degree program. The Program is designed to be completed in one calendar year. Students spend two summers on campus pursuing graduate course work. During the academic year between these summers, students earn internship and independent study credit while working in an alternative public school. The Program involves 9 to 12 hours in graduate work in the student's teaching area, 9 to 12 hours in courses in alternative education, 12 hours in an internship practicum, and 3 to 9 hours in electives or independent study. The sequence of course work is organized into four phases:

Phase I; Personal Exploration:

Working closely with I.U. faculty members, students conduct an intimate self-examination and self-exploration. Throughout this process, students are encouraged to consider what kind of teachers they want to become.

Phase II; Surveying Alternative Schools:

Students conduct a survey of different teacher roles and learning environments through readings and on-site visits. Throughout this process, students are assisted in matching their own unique capabilities and philosophies to teaching roles in existing alternative schools. Students are then assisted in organizing an individualized program designed to develop their desired teaching role.

Phase III; Teaching Internship:

The Alternative School Program is built around a teaching internship in an alternative public school. Students select a particular kind of alternative school, are interviewed, and if accepted, work for a school year at approximately half a teacher's salary. The interns work closely with alternative school administrators, teachers, students, and parents, visit other schools in the area, work on local task forces, and in general gain as many varied experiences as possible. Students earn up to 18 graduate credit hours during their internship by participating in on-site seminars, conferences, and through independent and group projects.

Phase IV; Students Teaching Students:

Following the year-long internship the students return to the I.U. campus to reflect on their experiences, synthesize their ideas, and share their insights with one another. These former interns also become instrumental in preparing the next year's interns for their coming assignments by teaming with I.U. faculty to teach summer courses.

Synergistic Relationships

The Program has developed a synergistic relationship of mutual assistance between I.U. and cooperating public schools. Public schools have assisted I.U. in designing the Program, provided their alternative schools as field-training sites, accepted voluntary positions as on-site adjunct professors to assist in the supervision and development of interns, and participated in yearly evaluation and Program review. The schools have also benefited by their relationship with the Program. I.U. interns have assisted public schools in planning, developing, and implementing new alternative schools. As such, the interns have developed new courses, planned curriculum, and participated in the entire range of problems and pressures that accompany the starting of a new school. They have also written funding proposals, developed plans for new schools, conducted research and "needs analyses," and helped evaluate alternative schools. Thus, the Alternative School Program is both a field-based teacher education program and a renewal system for public education.

The Alternative School Program was planned during 1971 and 1972 and initiated during the spring of 1972. Students were recruited and trained via experimental courses during the summer. In 1972 seven students were placed as interns in cooperating public schools in four school districts in the Midwest. At the end of the school year, the Program was revised, and by 1973-74 the number grew to 19 interns working in five school districts in Tennessee, Kentucky, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Washington. Currently there are 37 interns working in ten states and 14 school districts.

OBJECTIVES

The Alternative School Program has two clusters of objectives; one deals with the training of teachers, while the other focuses on public school renewal.

Teacher Education Objectives

The Program is designed to assist teachers in obtaining the skills and experiences necessary for assuming one of the new teaching roles emerging in alternative public schools. The Program is individualized, and as such, is as much a process as it is a program. By the time the Program is completed, teachers will have demonstrated their ability to:

1. provide a comprehensive personal analysis of their capabilities as teachers and conceptualize the kind of teachers they want to become

2. develop and complete an individual program of self-development, designed to move them toward the kind of teachers they want to become

3. develop a comprehensive rationale for alternative education and be able to describe and critique the types of alternatives in operation today

4. successfully complete the process of obtaining a field internship

5. successfully complete an internship in an alternative public school

6. create and implement a new educational component for the public school district in which they are interning

7. participate in the professional development of future interns

8. obtain a position in public education

School Renewal Objectives

The Program also has a number of important objectives in the area of school renewal. These objectives vary among school districts, but all are directly related to creating and maintaining new alternative schools and programs. These objectives include the conceptualization, development, and implementation of entirely new schools, courses, and programs.

SIGNIFICANCE TO TEACHER EDUCATION

1. The Program has demonstrated the feasibility of a university joining with public school systems to cooperatively plan, develop, and staff a field-based teacher education program where the primary training component is located in public schools.

2. The Program demonstrates that local public schools can assume a major responsibility for the training and supervision of teachers.

3. The Program demonstrates in a dramatic way how teacher education programs can be an active force in the renewal of public education; i.e., involving teacher education programs as an integral component in an institutional change strategy.

4. The Program has demonstrated the possibility of teacher education programs being developed to respond directly to pressing needs in public schools and utilizing the public school personnel in the planning, developing, and staffing of the programs.

5. The Program has demonstrated that processes can be developed to enable prospective teachers to actively participate in their own professional growth by identifying the kinds of teachers they want to become, designing a program to achieve their goals, and by selecting a field training site for a practicum internship experience.

6. The Program has attempted to *utilize* the socializing effects of the culture of schools in a positive way. By placing interns in alternative schools for a year, it is assumed that the culture of the new school will socialize the interns into more creative, effective teachers.

EVALUATION

A. Employment Record: All Program graduates are currently employed in public schools, all but one in alternative public schools. Twenty per cent of the graduates hold administrative positions in alternative schools. Other former interns are also employed in alternative schools while completing their degrees; some of these, likewise, hold administrative positions.

B. Development of New Schools: During the past three years, the I.U. interns have become a key factor in the planning, development, and implementation of several alternative public schools. The following is a list of the new schools that the Program has assisted in creating.

Monroe County Alternative School, Bloomington, Indiana
Brown Open School, Louisville, Kentucky
Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Optional School
Street Academy, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Open Junior High School, Flint Michigan
Environmental Studies Program, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Center for World Studies, Grand Rapids, Michigan
City School-Without-Walls, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Poway Open School, Poway, California

C. Graduate Interns Indicate the Primary Advantages of the Alternative School Program:

1. to actively participate in a renewal program for public education
2. to work in new schools that demand the maximum in creativity and intellectual problem solving
3. to be surrounded by a staff of talented educators who offer assistance and suppor
4. to gain personal relationships with key decision makers in public schools systems
5. to provide realistic and effective on-the-job training for the new roles in public education
6. to provide graduates a national visibility that has led to both job placement and rapid career advancement

D. The Evaluation Center of the I.U. Division of Teacher Education conducted an external evaluation of the Alternative School Teacher Education Program during the 1973-74 school year and found that the Program had a "range of experiences . . . unparalleled in traditional teacher preparation programs." It also found students more introspective about their teaching than other teachers, and that cooperating public schools viewed the Program as essential in "maintaining the excellence of our alternative schools."

For more info or copies of Program evaluation write: Alternative School Teacher Education Program, Suite 339, School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.